keep a check on the profits of the companies so that such medicines could reach the general public of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (c) The 74 bulk drugs specified in the First Schedule of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995 (DPCO' 95) and the formulations based thereon are under price control. Prices of non-Scheduled formulations are fixed by the manufacturers themselves, however, the Government takes corrective measures where the public interest is found to be adversely affected. This power of Government applies to Patented medicines as well.

Uniform MRP system for medicines

207. SHRIMATI N.P DURGA: Will the Minister of CHEMICALSAND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Ministry has formulated a proposal to introduce a uniform MRP system for medicines sold in retail;

(b) if so, how the Ministry is coordinating with the States to have a uniform sales tax/MRP on medicines;

(c) whether any meeting of the Health Ministers of States has been convened before taking a final view on the subject; and

(d) if so, the details of the outcome?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (d) Under the provisions of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995 (DPCO' 95), prices of both Scheduled and non-Scheduled formulations are printed as "retail price not to exceed.....local taxes extra". Representations have been received from time to time that the provisions of the DPCO '95 should be amended for printing the retail prices of all medicines inclusive of all taxes. Various options are being considered for solving the problem, however, due to difference in types and rates of local taxes of States/local authorities, no proper solution has been found so far. A meeting of Finance Ministers and Health Ministers

of all States/UTs was held on 18.8.2004 to discuss, *inter alia,* the issue of MRP of medicines. However, as the States did not generally agree to the proposal of either exempting medicines from sales tax or reducing sale tax on medicines to uniform level, no final solution could be found on this issue in the meeting.

Package for FACT, Kerala

208. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that a package was admitted by the Central Government and State Government of Kerala for reviving the FACT;

(b) the extent to which the package has been implemented, so far, by the Central Government and the State Government;

(c) whether concessions promised by Government of Kerala was implemented fully; and

(d) the steps proposed to be intiated by Government to sustain the FACT in the public sector?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (d) The third and long term package for revival of FACT keeping in view its request for writing off the outstanding Government loan of Rs. 609.26 crores as on 31.3.2004 has been initiated by the Government of India. The Union Government has also pursued with the Government of Kerala certain concessions for reduction of State levies/taxes sought by the FACT which would improve its financial conditions. The officials of the Ministry met with the Senior Officers of the Government of Kerala including the Chief Minister of Kerala recently to expedite the concessions.

Irrational combinations

209. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of various irrational combinations being sold;